

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 00900 281258Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /061 W
-----078485 290148Z /66
R 272120Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6035

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 900

EO 11652:GDS
TAGS: PINT, CO
SUBJ: OUTLOOK FOR THE FEBRUARY ELECTION

1. ALTHOUGH VOTERS ON FEBRUARY 26 WILL ELECT BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, DEPARTMENTAL ASSEMBLIES AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, THE ELECTION'S MAIN INTEREST FOR THE U.S. IS ITS ADDITIONAL PURPOSE AS AN INDIRECT PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY FOR THE MAJORITY LIBERAL PARTY. THE NOMINATION FOR THE PRESIDENCY WILL GO TO THE CONTENDER WHOSE SUPPORTERS WIN THE MOST VOTES IN THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION.

2. THE OUTLOOK IS FOR A LOW TURNOUT IN FEBRUARY. VOTER REGISTRATIONS, PERMITTED IN COLOMBIA'S FOUR LARGEST CITIES TO PERMIT VOTERS TO VOTE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS, RATHER THAN AT DISTANT (FOR MANY) CENTRAL POLLING POINTS, HAVE BEEN VERY LOW. A POOR TURNOUT AT THE POLLS IS EXPECTED TO FAVOR TURBAY'S MACHINE, AND BE A SETBACK FOR LLERAS, WHO HAS BEEN COUNTING ON AN UPSURGE OF PUBLIC OPINION TO WIN HIM THE CANDIDACY. MOST INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS ARE PREDICTING A TURBAY VICTORY, ALTHOUGH BY A CLOSER MARGIN THAN WAS PREDICTED SIX MONTHS AGO. THE RECENT IMPRISONMENT OF CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES PRESIDENT SANTOFIMIO, A TURBAY SUPPORTER, HAS PROBABLY COST TURBAY VOTES, ESPECIALLY IN BOGOTA. ONE OR TWO OTHER CASES OF CONGRESSIONAL MALFEASANCE INVOLVING TURBAY SUPPORTERS, WHICH WILL PROBABLY EMERGE DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, MAY FURTHER ERODE TURBAY'S
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 00900 281258Z

MARGIN.

3. MOST POLITICAL HANDICAPPERS ARE PREDICTING AN ELECTORAL RESULT ON THE ORDER OF: TURBAY CANDIDATES - 900,000; LLERAS CANDIDATES - 800,000; OTHERS - 200,000. A NARROW VICTORY BY TURBAY WOULD HEIGHTEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A SPLIT IN THE PARTY, PROVOKED BY THE DEFEATED LLERAS AND HIS SUPPORTERS. LLERAS HAS

MAINTAINED A STEADY STREAM OF ACCUSATIONS OF GOVERNMENT FAVORITISM FOR TURBAY. IF LLERAS LOSES BY A NARROW MARGIN, HE IS LIKELY TO CLAIM THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN VICTORIOUS WERE IT NOT FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF HIS RIVAL. LLERAS, HOWEVER, IS NOT LIKELY TO RUN FOR THE PRESIDENCY ON HIS OWN TICKET, A MOVE WHICH WOULD ENSURE THE ELECTION OF THE CONSERVATIVE BETANCUR, ALTHOUGH THE DEPTH OF HIS DISTASTE FOR TURBAY MIGHT TEMPT HIM TO DO SO.

4. FOR THE CONSERVATIVES, WHO ALREADY HAVE AN AGREED UPON CANDIDATE, BELISARIO BETANCUR, THE FEBRUARY ELECTION WILL BE A STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTY FACTIONS TO DETERMINE WHO WILL CONTROL THE PARTY. AT PRESENT, THE PRO-GOVERNMENT GROUP LED BY ALVARO GOMEZ AND THE OPPOSITION PASTRANA-OSPINA CONSERVATIVES ARE ROUGHLY EVENLY REPRESENTED IN BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS. THE LATTER GROUP WILL PROBABLY BECOME THE MAJORITY CONSERVATIVE BLOC IN CONGRESS, FOLLOWING THE ELECTION. THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION HAS LOST A GREAT DEAL OF SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY AMONG CONSERVATIVES, AND THE UNREMITTING ATTACKS AGAINST LOPEZ AND THE ALVARISTAS, ACCUSED OF SELLING OUT TO LOPEZ, BY THE OSPINA-PASTRANISTAS, WILL GIVE THEM A CLEAR ADVANTAGE.

5. THE MAJORITY FACTIONS OF BOTH PARTIES IN THE NEXT CONGRESS WILL THUS PROBABLY BE THE LIBERAL TURBAYISTAS AND THE CONSERVATIVE OSPINA-PASTRANA WING. WHILE THESE GROUPS HAVE BEEN BITTER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 00900 281258Z

FOES DURING THIS ADMINISTRATION, THEY WILL PROBABLY BURY THEIR RIVALRY AND WORK TOGETHER UNDER THE LIKELY PRESIDENCY OF TURBAY.

ASENCIO

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION FORECASTS, ELECTION CANDIDATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BOGOTA00900
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780043-0552
Format: TEL
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780116/aaaaanan.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7cb770df-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3704027
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OUTLOOK FOR THE FEBRUARY ELECTION
TAGS: PINT, CO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7cb770df-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014